/91/ [Galicia] Self-Aid [Volhynia]

555 Galicia and Volhynia are parts of the ghetto of the world, lying between Cracow and Odessa. There is no question about the fact that anyone who can here compete commercially with the Jews and politically with the Poles has certain abilities. The Ukrainians of Galicia have a talent for organization. If their business methods are often primitive according to our conceptions, it is not their fault. Where proper money is scarce, as is the case among all small peasants of the East and Southeast, it is replaced by some marketable goods: people unhesitatingly deal in eggs. Ukrainian cooperatives tried very hard to change these conditions; they were equally adept in ancient barter as in international business involving clearing and regulations pertaining to payments and foreign exchange.

555 [436] • 476

Jews and cooperatives waged a bitter fight against each other. But where usury and chain businesses of ill repute flourish, cooperatives have an easy time of it. Before the First World War the usurers demanded a 100% interest. Now they say: "I am giving you money; good, - but you must sell me your calves, your geese, your chickens and your eggs." For a zentner of seed they demand two zentner of produce from the harvest. In the gin shops they manage to obtain, by fraudulent means, the best pastures of the Huzul country, only to rent them to the former owners. If the cooperative makes its way into such villages which are under Jewish domination, it soon has the peasants on its side, and since no one buys from the Jew, no one sells to him and his inn is avoided, he must sooner or later pack up his belongings. /92/

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For the Ukrainians the Jewish problem is a problem of food. Wherever people have ambitions and where they desire to improve their basic way of living, they run up against Jews. Jews

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U 563 are found in the villages and cities, everywhere except at hard peasant labor. As early as 1900, E.J. 162 74% of all Jews earning a livelihood in Russia, Poland and Galicia were in commerce, in the credit system, in crafts and in industry. In 1931 there [U 463] were 158,400 Jews living in villages in East Galicia alone, that is 3% of the people living in the country; in the cities, on the other hand, there were 454,900 Jews or 37.3% of the urban population. (51) In 1929 the various trades were

51. Seraphim, Jewry in East European Area, p. 340.

50% in the hands of Jews, and in Volhynia a total of 73% of all tailors, shoemakers, tanners, bakers, furriers, blacksmiths, watchmakers and other artisans were Jews.

U 563 In spite of the fact that the Ukrainians lived in such close proximity to Jews, they kept their cultural life free of Jewish influence and their race free from Jewish blood.

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U •476 "More important than selling and profit is the community which has become happy and morally strong as a result of proper training by means of cooperative work and self-aid." These words were not, as might be supposed, spoken at a major assembly of German cooperatives; they were coined at Lwów by the head of the Ukrainian cooperatives. They were addressed to the West Ukrainian people. The Ukrainian cooperatives were of unusual national significance; they improved the wretched condition of the peasants and educated the latter to think in terms of the common welfare; and they offered to Ukrainian intelligentsia a real, albeit meager possibility of existence. How can conditions in the country be anything but miserable if U 162 60% of the peasants own dwarf farms with less than

162 five hectares of land, if overpopulation is so great that in 49% of the country there are between 80 and 100 /93/ people and in 51% there are more than 100 persons per square kilometer. (52)

52. Kubiyovich: The Distribution of the Population, page 35.

476 The ideological center of the Ukrainian cooperative system was the "Revised Union of Ukrainian Cooperatives" with its center in Lwów. At the beginning of 1939 it controlled the four departmental provincial centers with a total of 3455 cooperatives and 673,000 members. The four departmental centers were the "Centrobanka" for credit cooperatives (1889 members at the end of 1938, with an annual sale of 70.5 million zloty); the "Centrosoyuz" for the agricultural buying and selling cooperatives, the "Maslosoyuz" for dairy farmers' cooperatives and the "Narodnya Torgovlia" for urban consumer societies. The private capital of the Revised Union amounted to 23 million zloty at the end of 1938, the savings came to over 12 million zloty. The sales receipts of all cooperatives amounted to 159 million zloty.

One is almost tempted to speak of a "Ukrainian autarchy" if one hears how much business the buying and selling cooperatives carried on. Galicia and [241] particularly Podolia with its rich black earth and sheltered valleys is rich in fruit, vegetables, legumes, hemp, grain. Cattle-raising is also [233] intensively carried on, especially in the Carpathian foreland. The peasant brought all these products to the cooperative which was ready to serve him and not to profit by him. The cooperatives maintained collection and sorting centers where the products were turned into "standardized" goods. The same cooperative furnished practically everything a farm household needed: shoes, chicory, sugar, kerosene, headgear, candles, seeds, artificial fertilizer and machines. Much of it

476 was made in the cooperative society's own factories. The society owned cement factories, lime plants, mills, cloth-weaving factories, bakeries, oil presses and even a factory that made boot polish and cosmetics.

439 Whither did Ukrainian goods go? Peas, beans and poultry to England and Belgium, clover seed to Holland, /94/ pigs to Germany, beef cattle via Constanta to Greece, poultry to Germany, Switzerland and to - Palestine, eggs to many countries and, in cans, as far as Buenos Aires.

[545] Sociologically noteworthy is the growth of an urban stratum of artisans, merchants and small industrialists. The Ukrainians who, much to their 369 own disadvantage, neglected the cities because of 476 their love for quiet village life, now gradually pushed into the cities, and the credit cooperatives supported them in this.

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741 Of greatest significance for the advancement 517 of Ukrainian culture were the societies for edu- 217 cation and public health. The society for popular education, "Prosvita", was even older than the Ukrainian system of cooperatives, reaching back to 1883. It was a veritable national sanctuary of the Ukrainians. The people are indebted to it for a large part of their cultural advance. The "Prosvita" was an actual school for advanced studies in the country. In 3214 village libraries with 700,000 volumes, two instructive monthly magazines and with inexpensive editions of books, it enabled the village inhabitants who were cut off from all urban culture to obtain the knowledge which alone made it possible for them to assert themselves against their enemies. Besides that, 741 "Prosvita", which on January 1, 1938 numbered 517 360,000 members, and owned 1457 club houses with rooms for meetings, promoted group singing, music, the community theater and folk art. It helped

000 available positions. And yet the proportion of Jews in the total population amounted to -7.1%. (115) On the board of the Commissariat of Inter-

115. Seraphim: The Jewry in East European Area, page 263.

nal Trade in Moscow there were at times 49 Jews among 124 members, and in the foreign trade commissariat there were no less than 55 out of 106. In the finance commissariat "Judaization was complete". With the constant change of leadership in the commissariats, the number of Jews active in the commissariats for communications, for inland and ocean shipping, for heavy industry, agriculture, the food industry and in many other commissariats the Jews occupy the key positions. (116) From there they direct the "mass invasion"

116. Seraphim: The Jewry in the East European Area, page 642 ff.

of the members of their race into the middle and top-rank positions of the administrative and economic system of the Union.

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476 Today there are only meager remnants left of the East Ukrainian system of cooperatives which was still performing tolerable services during the time of the collectives, - in 1930 there were 40,081 cooperatives with 5.5 million members. (117)

117. Zalotzietskiy: The Spiritual Life of the Ukraine, page 143.

The distribution of goods is handled up to about 80% by state stores; the cooperatives are on the same footing with them. Where the state regulates